

Eastern Fables & Folk Tales

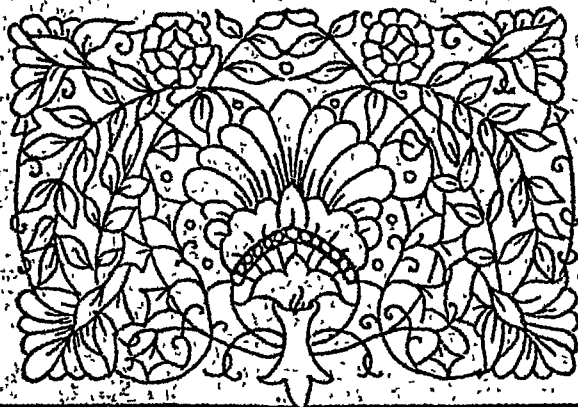
Indian Fables from **Hitópadesha**

SECOND SERIES

BY

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M.A.



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No.

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GUIDE TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF VOWEL-SOUNDS IN INDIAN PROPER NAMES

- a, the indefinite sound of *a* in human, alone, China, combat.
- ā, the sound of *a* in part, path, last, grass, calm.
- ē, the sound of *e* in they, vein, reign, prey, eight.
- ī, the sound of *i* in pin, lift, fill, dīsh, finger.
- ī, the sound of *i* in police, marine, clique, unique.
- ō, the sound of *o* in home, boat, bone, most, load.
- u, the sound of *u* in full, push, put, bull, puss.
- ū, the sound of *u* in rule, June, rumour, brute, rude.
- ai, the sound of *ai* or *ay* in aye, serai, Ayah, Isaiah, Kaiser, naïve.
- au, the sound of *ou* or *ow* in mouth, stout, how, foul, foul.

HIT-Ó-PAD-ÉSH-A,
OR
THE BOOK OF GOOD COUNSELS.
SECOND SERIES.

1. THE BIRDS AND THE MONKEYS.

. ABSTAIN FROM LAUGHING AT OTHER PEOPLE'S TROUBLES.

1. On the bank of the river Nar-ma-dá there is a large cotton tree, in which certain birds were wont to build their nests. They built them with so much skill, that even in the heaviest rain or the roughest wind they found shelter and warmth inside them, and laid their eggs there with safety.

2. One day, when the sky was dark with masses of cloud and the rain was falling in torrents, the birds looking down from their warm nests saw some monkeys crouching at the foot of the tree and seeking in vain for shelter. The monkeys were so pinched with cold, that the birds overhead could hear their teeth chattering.

3. "Ho, you monkeys!" said the birds; "why do you stand there shivering and shaking with cold? We birds have nothing but beaks to work with, yet with these we bring bits of straw and build nests which protect us from cold and rain. You monkeys have both hands and feet; why then do you sit down in despair? You could make much better dwellings than we can, if you tried."

4. The monkeys were displeased at being laughed at in this tone. "O ho!" they said among themselves; "these birds are jeering at us. Wait till this storm subsides; then we will show them what we can do with our hands and feet, and what their nests can do to protect them. They will not laugh at us, when the next shower of rain falls."

5. As soon as the storm ceased and the monkeys ventured to leave the shelter of the tree, they climbed up to the tops of the branches where the nests were, pulled the nests to pieces, and threw the eggs on the ground. "Laugh at us now!" said the monkeys; "by laughing at us in our time of trouble you have brought trouble on yourselves."

2. THE CROW AND THE STORK.

AVOID EVIL COMPANY.

1. A Crow that lodged in the branch of a certain tree was rather friendly with a Stork that lived under the same tree on the ground. Between birds so unlike in form as well as in habits there was no real friendship; but they were often seen in each other's company, and they set off together on the day when all classes of birds were on their way to the sea-shore to pay homage to Gar-ur, the great king of all the feathered tribes that exist on this earth.

2. By chance a milkman, who carried a pot of curds on his head, was going on the same road. The Crow, being a thief by nature and skilful in the movement of his wings, made a good meal off the curds, which he took every now and then from the pot borne on the herdsman's head. The Stork, being unwilling to steal, made no attempt to take any curds.

3. When the milkman sat down to rest and put his pot of curds on the ground, he saw for the first time that the contents of the pot had become much less than they were when he

started. Looking upwards he saw the Crow and the Stork. The Crow, being a quick flyer, flew off and escaped. The Stork, being slow of motion, was chased by the milkman, run down, and killed.



3. THE HERON, THE CROW, AND THE TRAVELLER.

KEEP ANGER UNDER CONTROL. AVOID EVIL COMPANY.

1. On the road to Uj-jain a large pipāl tree stands all alone by the wayside. There is no other tree at hand, under which a passing

traveller might take shelter ^{from the heat} from the heat. On the branches of this tree a Heron and a Crow were wont to perch and screen themselves behind its leaves from the sun's glare.

2. One day, when the sun was at its hottest,



a man, who had been walking many miles on foot, came and stood under the tree. Having laid his bow and arrows on the ground, he threw himself down and soon fell asleep. By the time that he had slept for two or three hours the shadow of the tree shifted, and the man's face was left exposed to the full blaze of the sun.

3. The Heron, being a kind bird, spread out its wings so as to cast a shadow over the man's face. There he lay sleeping as soundly as ever and snoring with open mouth.

4. But the Crow, being of an evil nature, was moved to envy at seeing the man enjoy so much rest and sleep through the kindness of the Heron; so he dropped a foul morsel into the sleeper's mouth and flew away. The man started up from his sleep, and seeing no bird near him except the Heron, picked up his bow and shot it dead with an arrow.

5. Two useful things may be learnt from this fable. (a) Take care that your anger is just, before you give way to it and act upon it: here the man was at fault. (b) Avoid evil company: the poor Heron, in spite of all its goodness, lost its life from being in the company of the wicked Crow.

4. THE DYED JACKAL.

DESPISE NOT YOUR OWN KINDRED.

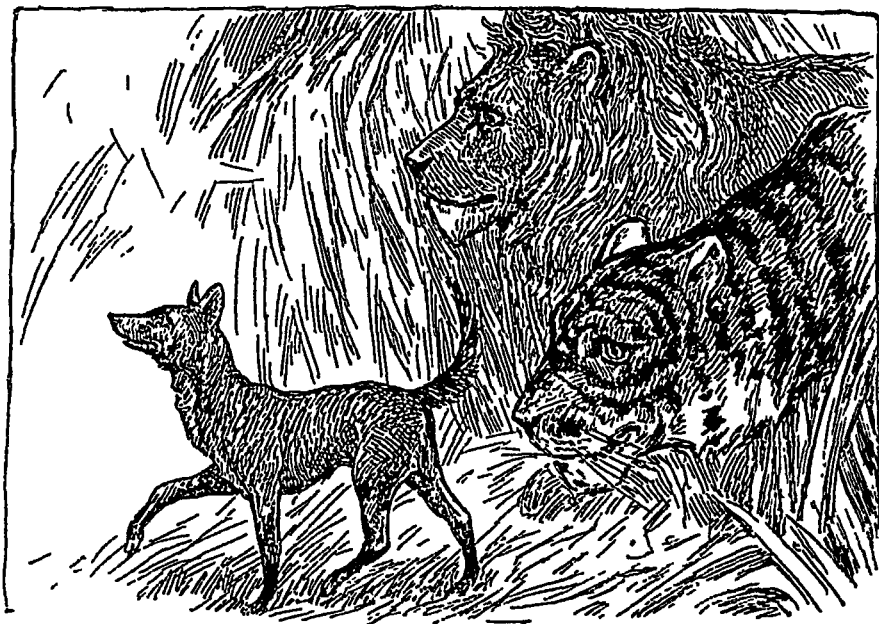
1. One evening a jackal, roaming at pleasure on the outskirts of a town, slipped by chance into a vat, which at the time contained a foot or

two of the blue dye which is made from indigo. The walls of the vat were too high to give him a chance of jumping out; so he made up his mind that, if he heard any one coming, he would lie down on the bottom of the vat and pretend to be dead.

2. Next morning the dyer went, as usual, to his vat. Finding what seemed to be the dead body of a jackal lying there, he took it up, carried it away to the jungle, and flung it down on the ground. Left to himself the jackal arose and saw with delight that his kháki or pale-brown colour was changed to a brilliant blue. "Now," said he to himself, "with such a grand colour as this I am fit to be made king of the jackals. I will go amongst them and make them bow down before me."

3. So he went into the forest, called his kinsfolk together, and said to them: "Kinsmen, behold my colour! The Goddess of the woods has with her own divine hands made an extract from certain plants, and with this splendid fluid she has anointed me king of this forest. Blue is the colour that kings wear among men. Look at me, and know that henceforth I am your lord and master."

4. The jackals were so struck with awe at the sight of his blue-dyed fur, that they dared not refuse to own him as their king. They bowed their heads to the earth and said, "We are at your service, O master." By degrees the



fame of his kingship reached the ears even of such fine beasts as lions and tigers. Attended by a lion and a tiger wherever he went, he became at last so proud that he despised his own kindred and left off going amongst them.

5. The jackals were angry at being treated in this way by one of their own tribe. "Leave

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him to me," said an old jackal ; "I will take the pride out of him. Those noble beasts, the lion and the tiger who attend him, are deceived by the colour that he wears ; they do not know that he is merely a jackal. But I will show him in his true colours. Let us go towards him in a body, and set up a loud yell such as we jackals are wont to make in the evening. That Blue-coat, when he hears us yell, will yell back ; for he cannot change his nature. If a dog were made king, would he not begin at once to gnaw his shoe-strap?"

6. So indeed it came to pass. The royal Blue-coat, as soon as he heard the yell of a pack of jackals, yelled back to them with all his might. The tiger, who was then at his side, finding from his cry that he was only a jackal, fell upon him and slew him.

5. THE TWO GEESE AND THE TORTOISE.

A LESSON IN CAUTION.

1. In the country once called Magadha, now known as South Behar, there was a pool, in which a couple of geese had long lived in perfect

safety. Near at hand lived a friend of theirs, a tortoise, whom they called Shell-neck. Between the geese and this tortoise a friendship was formed through living together as neighbours for several years.

2. One day all three were alarmed by some fishermen coming to that pool. The Tortoise heard them say, "We had better stop here for the night; in the morning we will come and catch fish, tortoises, and anything else that we can find." The Tortoise repeated all this to his friends, the Geese, and said, "Now what am I to do?"

"First of all," said the Geese, "let us be sure that there is no mistake, and that these fishermen are really coming."

"Not so," said the Tortoise; "I dare not wait. There is no doubt that the fishermen are coming. Some means must be contrived by which I may be able to get to some other lake."

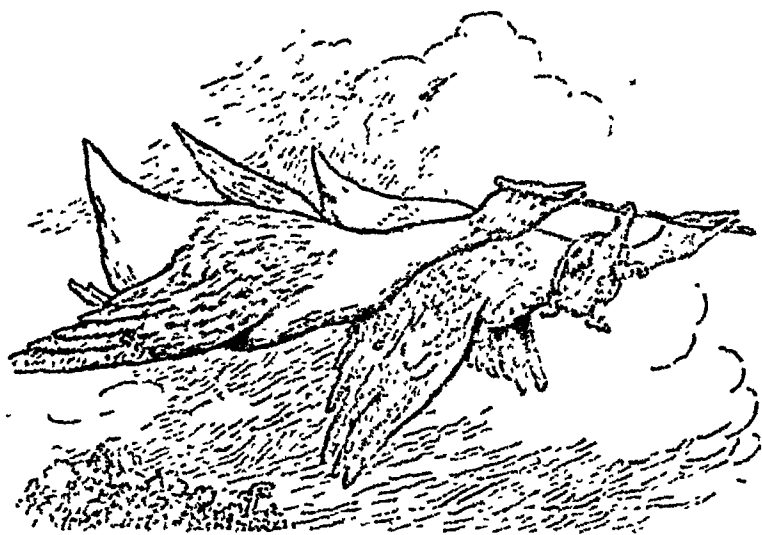
"But you cannot go," said they, "on dry land."

"Then I must go along with you through the air," said the Tortoise.

3. How this could be done was a question that at first not one of them could answer. Then

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suddenly the Tortoise thought of a plan. "With my mouth," said he, "I can hang on to a staff which you two can hold in your beaks. I will take my place between you, and with the strength of your wings you will easily take me through the air and carry me to another pool."



4. "We will do this," said they, "if we can be quite sure that you understand the risks. If you once open your mouth on the way, you will drop and be dashed to pieces on the earth. Your safety will depend on yourself, not upon us."

"Am I such a fool," said the Tortoise, "as to do anything so stupid? Nothing will make me open my mouth before I reach the next lake."

5. So they set out on their journey through the air, taking their friend with them. As they passed over the heads of some herdsmen on the way, the herdsmen ran after them exclaiming, "Halloo! here is a marvellous sight: a tortoise carried through the air by two geese! What fun!" "If the tortoise falls," said one, "we will cook him and eat him on this very spot." "No," said another; "if I catch him, I will take him home to my house and have him properly cooked on the hearth." 375.

6. Many other such things were said by these men in the hearing of the Tortoise. At last the Tortoise could bear it no longer. Losing his temper he cried out in a passion, "You shall eat ashes." But before he could finish saying what he wished to say he fell from the staff, and was picked up dead by one of the herdsmen.

6. THE FISHERMEN AND THE THREE FISHES.

A LESSON IN PRUDENCE.

1. There was a certain pond or pool which, when it had more water than it could hold, emptied itself by a narrow channel into a neigh-

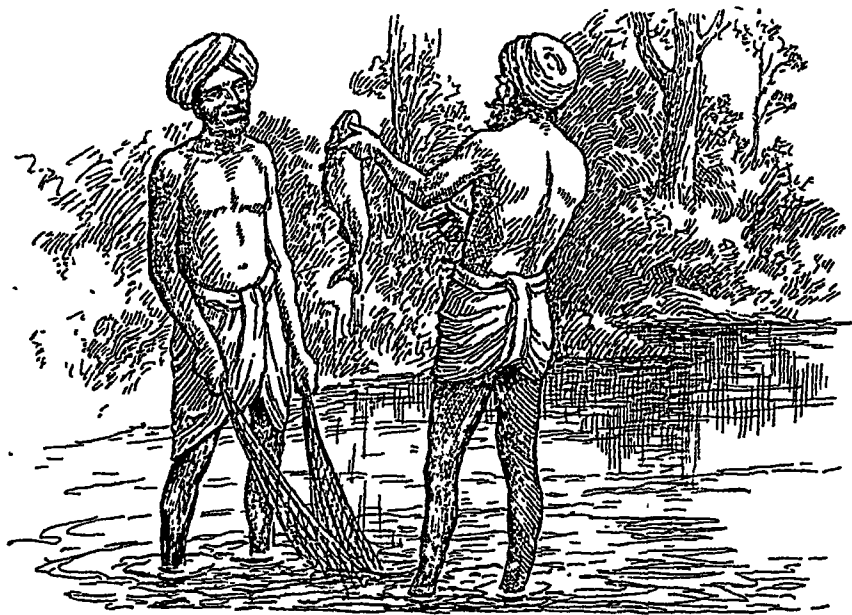
bouring river. In that pond there were three fishes, all very much alike in shape, size, and colour, but unlike one another in every other respect.

2. One of them was clever enough to foresee an evil that was coming, and prevent it before it came. The second preferred to wait and see what was coming, and when it came to trust to his cleverness in finding some means of escape. The third, being utterly stupid, took no thought about the future, and left everything to chance or fate. "What must come, must," he used to say. "Why should we trouble ourselves about things which we cannot prevent?"

3. The water of the pond was so clear, that the fish could be seen from the bank by any one passing. But as the pond was in a quiet place, they had long lived there without being disturbed. One day, however, some fishermen came that way, and then their troubles began. The fish heard them say, "These are fine fish, and would sell well in the market. We must go and fetch our net and catch them."

4. The fish, on hearing this, discussed the matter among themselves. But as they could not agree what should be done, each decided

to act for himself and follow his own judgment. The first, being more clever and prudent than the other two, did not wait a moment, but threw himself out of the pond, and made his way towards the river by the narrow passage of



water that joined the pond to the river. Having jumped into the river, he swam off and put himself entirely out of reach. The other two fish remained where they were.

5. When the fishermen returned with their net, the first thing they did was to stop up the little channel between the pond and the river.

The second fish then saw what a mistake he had made in remaining in the pond after the first one had left it. But he bethought himself of a plan, and was not quite helpless. He floated as stiffly as if he were dead on the surface of the water, keeping his belly upwards. One of the fishermen picked him out of the water with his hand, and believing him to be dead flung him on to the bank. From the bank he made his way, but not without much risk and labour, to the river ; and in this way he escaped.

6. The third fish, when he saw that the fishermen were after him, dived down to the bottom of the pond and tried to hide under the weeds, but he could not avoid falling into their hands. He was caught, killed, and sold in the market. So he lost his life from being too stupid to think about his safety while he still had the chance.

7. THE BRAHMAN AND THE JARS.

A LESSON IN CAUTION.

1. In the city of Déví-Kotta there lived a Bráhman whose name was Déva Shar-man. He had no trade and did no work, but lived by

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begging and by taking gifts from any one who would give them on the great annual feast-days. At the feast of Das-ha-ra, when all men are most inclined to make gifts to the poor, this Bráhmaṇ received from some one a dish of flour, which he took away into a potter's shed.

2. As he lay there, half-asleep and half-awake, he began to think within himself how rich he might become, if he made a good use of that dish of flour. "I could get ten cowries," he said, "by selling this pot of flour. With these cowries I could buy some of these pots and pans which I see around me, and sell them at a profit. With all that money I could purchase betel nuts, pieces of cloth, and other goods, and make fresh profit by their sale. And so I will go on trading with one thing after another, until I have made a lákḥ of rupees. Then I shall be rich enough to marry four wives. Among them there will, of course, be one that is prettier than the rest. That is the one whom I shall love the most. The others, of course, will be jealous ; but if they quarrel and trouble me with their noise, I will beat them like this—and this—and this."

3. While he said these words he swung his staff about him to this side and that with so much force that, without looking what he was doing, he smashed not only his own dish of flour,



but many of the potter's jars and pots. The potter, on hearing the sound of his pots being broken, rushed into the shed, seized the Brahman by the throat, and turned him out. So his plans for making a l  kh of rupees came suddenly to an end.

8. THE BRÁHMAN WHO DISTRUSTED HIS OWN EYES.

1. A Bráhmaṇ had gone to a certain village, where he bought a goat which he intended to use for sacrifice. He was on his way back to his own village, carrying the goat on his shoulder, when he was spied by three rogues, who said to one another, "What a fine meal we could make off that goat, if we could only get hold of it without attacking the Bráhmaṇ."

2. So they thought of a plan, by which they might seize the goat without using force. They seated themselves at the foot of three different trees, that stood at some distance apart along the road that the Bráhmaṇ would have to take.

3. As soon as the Bráhmaṇ had come up to the first tree, the rogue stationed there went up to him and said: "O Bráhmaṇ, how is it that you, being a man of the highest caste, came to put that dog on your shoulder? A dog is not a fit animal for a Bráhmaṇ to carry." "It is not a dog," said he, "it is a goat, which I have bought for sacrifice." "It is a dog," said the

rogue. But the Bráhman paid no further heed to him and went on.

4. As soon as he reached the second tree, the second rogue stepped forward and, pretending to be much surprised, said: "O Bráhman, why do



you carry a dog on your shoulder? You disgrace yourself by carrying such an unclean animal. How can we respect a man of your caste if you act thus?" The Bráhman said nothing, but laid the goat on the ground, and after scanning it again and again put it back on his shoulder and walked on.

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5. After going some distance further he came to the third tree, when the last of the rogues went up to him and reproached him saying: "How is it that you carry a dog and wear a Bráhmaṇ's thread at the same time? You are a hunter, not a Bráhmaṇ; and that dog on your shoulder is what helps you to kill your game. Shame on you!"

6. When the Bráhmaṇ heard this he said: "Surely some demon has smitten my sight this day and made me see things wrongly. Can all these men be under a mistake and I only in my right senses?" Having thus said he flung down the goat and went to the nearest stream to wash off the stain of having carried a dog. He then returned to his own village. The rogues took up the goat, and made a good meal off it.

9. THE SNAKE, THE CRANES, AND THE MONGOOSE.

BE CAREFUL WHOM YOU EMPLOY TO HELP YOU.

1. At the foot of a hill, near the bank of the Révá, there was a fig tree in which some cranes

had made their home. Under its roots there was a hole where a snake was wont to hide, and where it reared its young ones. To the cranes this snake was a very cruel neighbour; for whenever a fledgling came in sight, and was about to dip its claws or its beak into the stream, the snake crawled silently out and devoured it.

2. The cranes, seeing no way either of protecting their young or of driving away their enemy, were in despair. At last an old bird, who belonged to a different class, when he saw how helpless and perplexed the cranes were, came forward and gave them his advice.

3. "My friends," said the old bird, "there is a mongoose who has made his nest not far from here. Now a mongoose, as you know, is as fond of fish as a cat is; but like a cat it avoids water; so it seldom tastes the food that it loves best. Here, then, is your chance. Go into the brook hard by, bring up as many little fish as you can find, and lay a line of them along the space that lies between the hole of the mongoose and that of the snake. The mongoose will follow this bait till it reaches the hiding-place of your enemy, the snake. It will then devour the

snake and its young ones, and you will be released from all further attacks."

4. The advice given by the old bird was acted on. The mongoose, coming out of its hole, followed the line of fish laid for it; and at last, when all the fish had been eaten up, it reached the hole of the snake. Then it entered in and destroyed the snake and its young ones; for there is a natural enmity between a snake and a mongoose, and when they fight, the mongoose always conquers.

5. But the mongoose, being again in want of food after all the fish and all the snakes had been eaten, followed the old track once more, and was angry at finding nothing to eat. One day, having reached the foot of the tree, it heard the voices of the cranes overhead; for these birds were so much pleased at having been released from danger that when they saw the mongoose they could not help greeting him with delight. The mongoose climbed up the tree whenever it was hungry, and devoured by degrees all the cranes which the snake had left. The last enemy was worse than the first.

10. THE BRÁHMAN AND THE MONGOOSE.

ANGER WITHOUT CAUTION.

1. There was a Bráhman named Má-dhav-a, who lived at Uj-jain. He had a wife of the same caste, who had lately given birth to a son. The wife went to the nearest stream to bathe, as is the custom amongst women a few weeks after the birth of a child. But before leaving the house she placed the babe in charge of its father. Besides the father there was no other person in the house.

2. Meanwhile a messenger came from the Rájá, in whose kingdom the Bráhman lived, telling him to come at once to the palace to perform a sráddha, or Feast of the Dead, in honour of the Rájá's ancestors. The Bráhman was told to start at once, as the performance of the rite was urgent.

3. The Bráhman then said to himself, "What am I to do? I am a poor man. If I do not go at once, some other Bráhman will be sent for, and I shall lose the fee. Yet who is to take care of the babe, while I am away?" It then struck him to place the child under the

care of a mongoose, which he had reared from its birth and for a long time past had treated as kindly as if it had been his own child.

4. Soon after he had left the house a black serpent appeared, and crept slowly and silently



towards the child. The mongoose, seeing it approach, set upon it and rent it in pieces. Then seeing the Bráhmaṇ on his way to the house it ran out to meet him, and rolled itself at his feet, its mouth and claws being all smeared with blood.

5. Má-dhav-a, when he saw the mongoose in

that state, said to himself, "Surely now my son has been killed and eaten by this vile wretch of a weasel." Overcome with rage, and taking no trouble to find out whether his fears were well founded or not, he seized a stone and killed the mongoose.

6. When he went into the house and saw the child sleeping safely on a bed, and a black snake lying dead beside him with its throat bleeding, he was overwhelmed with remorse; and when his wife returned and saw what had happened, she covered him with reproaches.

11. THE HERMIT AND THE MOUSE.

INGRATITUDE PUNISHED.

1. In the forest of Gau-ta-ma there was a hermit called Mahá-tapas. This man lived on the small gifts of food brought to him by the people who lived in villages round about his hermitage. By the force of his devotions he had acquired the power of doing wonderful things. He made it one of his first duties to show kindness to any animals which were too small and helpless to be able to defend or protect themselves.

2. One day, as he sat at his frugal meal, a mouse fell to the ground from the beak of a crow that was flying above his head. The little animal, though stunned, was not killed by the fall. He picked it up, stroked it gently with his hand, and fed it with some grains of rice. Under such kind treatment it revived, and soon became fat and playful. It was now plump enough to attract the notice of a cat, who came suddenly upon it, but was held back by its protector. The hermit, seeing the danger that it was in, changed it into a cat strong enough to take care of itself against other cats.

3. The cat, however, was attacked by dogs, who would not leave it alone, but hunted it down and would have killed it, if the hermit had not changed it into a dog strong enough to fight any other dog that came near it. But, alas! this dog, though quite a match for other dogs, was no match for a tiger, which day after day was watching for a chance to devour it. To place the dog beyond reach of any further danger, the hermit changed it into a tiger; but he used to stroke this huge beast as fondly as if it was still a gentle little mouse.

4. Some village folk, passing near the her-

mitage, and seeing how tame this tiger was, exclaimed: "This is no tiger; it is merely a mouse that has been made to look like a tiger by the power of the hermit's devotions." The tiger overheard these words, and was so vexed that he said within himself: "As long as this



Saint lives, the story of my origin will be known and talked about. I must slay him and put an end to all this talk. Then I can go into another forest, where no one will know what I once was."

5. The holy man, knowing what was in the tiger's mind, changed the tiger back into a

mouse, and left it henceforth to take care of itself.

12. THE LAPWING AND THE SEA.

THE WEAK MAY SOMETIMES DEFEAT THE STRONG.

1. A pair of Lapwings made their nest in a sheltered nook on the sea-shore. But the hen bird did not find it a safe place in which to lay her eggs ; for the tide of the sea sometimes rose so high that it flooded the nest and carried off the eggs. This had happened more than once, so that when the time came for laying again, she told her mate that they must go and find some more sheltered spot to live in.

2. The male bird did not consent to leave the old nest. "Am I so feeble," said he, "that I cannot find some way to prevent the Sea from doing us all this harm?"

"Between you and the Sea," she said with a smile, "there is a vast difference in strength. Nothing in the world is so strong as the Sea, which can break down rocks and throw a flood into cities. How then can you expect to be able to make the Sea obey you and spare my eggs?"

"If the Sea," said he in an angry tone,

"takes away your eggs again, I will find means for compelling him to give them back."

At the bidding of her mate, the hen bird laid her eggs in the same nook as before.

3. The Sea, having heard all this, and being desirous of having his strength put to the test, raised a mighty flood and carried off the eggs. They floated away on the surface of the water to a great distance from the land. The hen bird with great grief went to her mate and said, "Oh, my lord, a sad thing has happened; my eggs are all lost. Did I not tell you that this would happen?"

"Fear not, my dear mate," said he, "I will do as I promised; I know how the Sea can be compelled to give them back."

4. He then went to the chief or leader of all the different kinds of birds and called a great meeting. He led them off to Gar-ur, the king of all the feathered tribes, and made his complaint. The great bird, after hearing what the Lapwing had to say, and seeing how angry the birds were, placed the matter before Vishnu and asked for his help.

5. Vishnu, being the Preserver of the World and of all things that live therein, even the

smallest, went to the Sea and ordered him to give back the eggs. The Sea was compelled to obey, and the eggs were restored to the Lapwings.

13. THE OLD SERPENT AND THE FROGS.

HARM DONE TO OTHERS RECOILS UPON THE DOER.

1. There was a serpent called Manda-bisarpa ("Slow-glider"), who through extreme old age, being unable to get food for himself, laid himself down on the edge of a pond, as if he had given up all hope of life. In that state he was seen by a certain frog, who said to him, "How is it that you do not ply for food?"

2. "Leave me, worthy Sir," said the serpent; "what hast thou to do with a hapless wretch like me?" "By all means," said the frog, "let me know your history. Perhaps I may be able to help you."

3. The old serpent then gave him the following tale: "Near this, in the city of Brahma-pur, there lived a Bráhmaṇ, who had a son named Su-shíla ('Good-hearted'). The young man was endued with every virtue. When he

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was twenty years of age, through some evil decree of fate, I bit him, and he died. The father became senseless with grief and rolled on the ground as if he were dead. His friends came round him and condoled with him.



Revived and consoled by their words, he raised himself from the ground and cursed me. The curse that he pronounced upon me was that I should become a carrier of frogs. It is the nature of serpents to live upon frogs, but I in my old age can no longer touch them for food, but am compelled to be their slave and carry

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them on my back. You have now heard my history."

4. The frog, when he had heard all this, believed it to be true, and went away and repeated it to the chief of his tribe. The chief came and mounted the back of the serpent, and told him to give him a ride through the grass at a moderate pace. The serpent did so.

5. But next day, when the chief asked for another such ride, the serpent moved so slowly that the chief inquired why he had become so sluggish. "I am scarcely able to crawl," said the serpent, "for want of food. I have had nothing to eat." "Help yourself to the frogs," said the frog-king, "as freely as you like. Eat them by my command."

6. The serpent accepted the order with thanks, and day after day, with the help of the frog-king, took as many frogs as he could eat, until there were no frogs left. He then turned round and ate His Majesty likewise.

THE END

Eastern Fables & Folk Tales

(ILLUSTRATED)

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J. C. NESFIELD, M.A.

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